

LA MORADA (The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe)

HABS NO. CA-2307

1931 Linea de Cielo

Rancho Santa Fe

San Diego

California

HABS
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37-RANSE,

5-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE

REDUCED COPIES OF DRAWINGS

Historic American Building Survey

National Park Service

Department of the Interior

P.O. Box 37127

Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LA MORADA
(The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe)

HABS No. CA-2307

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Location: 5951 Linea de Cielo, Rancho Santa Fe, San Diego County, California. Rancho Santa Fe, Map 2129, lot 147. San Diego County parcel number 266-281-5.

UTM zone 11, easterly 480930, northerly 3653200

Present Owner: Huntington Hotel Company/Royce family.

Present Occupant and Use: The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe

Significance: The first structure built by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company in Rancho Santa Fe, and the centerpiece of the Civic Center planned and designed by Lilian Rice, this building was initially used as a guest house for visitors who were potential investors in Rancho Santa Fe property.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1922. An article by Lilian Rice, "More Building in 1928 than ever Before," (Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 7 (January 1928): 11, 14) states:

Looking back five years, to November of 1922 when actual work began at Rancho Santa Fe, we find each year marking another achievement.

It was an important day when ground was broken for the Guest House [La Morada], the first building in the Civic Center. (p. 14)

2. Architect: Lilian Jenette Rice has been credited with the design of this building, and there is a preliminary sketch by her hand (copy included in supplemental material). However, an article in the June 11, 1922, San Diego Union, which commemorated the commencement of work at Rancho Santa Fe, quoted Col. Ed Fletcher, who had been involved with water development for the project:

Mr. L.G. Sinnard, a noted landscape engineer, will be in charge of the development work, and K. Z. Volk will be the project engineer. The Pioneer Truck company has the contract for the road construction. W. H. Wheeler, local architect, is drawing plans for the inn, which will be started in the civic center within the

next six weeks; also a store house, garage, etc.
(Real Estate Section, p.1)

Wheeler is not mentioned in any other source as having any connection with the development of Rancho Santa Fe, nor with the design for the inn. However, it is possible that he was first given the commission for the Rancho Santa Fe project, and that, for whatever reason, the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company was not satisfied with his work. Presumably, they then gave the commission to Requa and Jackson, who turned over the actual design of the buildings to their associate, Lilian Rice. Even this scenario seems unlikely, however, when the existence of the Requa and Jackson plot plan is considered. This plan, which lays out the individual blocks and roads that make up the Civic Center and gives a schematic plan for building placement, represents a more refined proposal than the preliminary design offered by L.G. Sinnard in his report of September 1921. Since it was the Requa and Jackson plot plan that was followed and constructed, it has been dated to early 1922, before actual work began in June. It would thus hardly seem likely that, after their Civic Center plan (with La Morada, shown in the shape it was built, at the far left) had been accepted, another architect would have been hired to design the buildings themselves. It would appear that the mention of Wheeler, who may have been an early contender for the commission, was a mistake, and that Lilian Rice should be given sole credit for the design of this building.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners: Chain of Ownership taken from Assessment Records, Santa Fe Irrigation District, Rancho Santa Fe, and Lot Records, Rancho Santa Fe Association:

1922-28 title to Block 32, lot 1 owned by Santa Fe Land Improvement Company*

1928 title owned by Rancho Santa Fe Corporation

1930-38 title owned by Santa Fe Land Improvement Company

April 1939 purchased by George Roslington, with address listed as Rancho Santa Fe

1940 purchased by George Richardson, Rancho Santa Fe

Fall 1958 purchased by Huntington Hotel Company/Daniel Royce
San Diego County parcel numbers of lots in Rancho Santa Fe also owned by Huntington Hotel Company, as part of The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe complex: 266-300-49; 266-300-38; 266-300-52; 266-300-53; 266-300-54; 266-300-55; 268-120-15; 266-182-30; 266-182-29; 266-182-28; 266-182-06; 266-182-37; 266-182-36; 266-182-08; 266-182-09; 266-281-04; 268-120-17; 266-281-01; 266-281-02; 268-120-43;

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268-120-44 (Source: Rancho Santa Fe Association files.)

* Block 32, lot 1 was part of a resubdivision filed as Map 2129 in the San Diego County Recorders Office in September 1926. Thus at some point in 1927 or 1928 (how long the process actually took is unclear), Block 32, lot 1 became lot 147 on Map 2129. There was no change in acreage when this shift occurred.

4. Original plans and construction: Although no original plans for this building have been found, a preliminary sketch, and many early photographs, permit the reconstruction of the original appearance of La Morada, including at least two interior rooms, the main lounge, and the dining room. The preliminary sketch is unsigned and undated, although it is in the hand of Lilian Rice, and can be dated to early 1922 (a copy is included in supplemental material). It shows a long, horizontal building, featuring two low wings with parapet roofs projecting from a higher, central, gabled section. The main entrance is through a large, deeply recessed doorway in the central section; this doorway is flanked by two large windows. A small rounded chimney projects from the crest of the gable roof. To the left of the central section is a three-bay wing, and then an open verandah with a pergola. Behind this verandah is a smaller structure, with four small window openings visible on one side. To the right of the central section is an extended wing, with asymmetrically arranged window openings. Most of this complex is surrounded by a wall, and the whole area is landscaped. A faintly drawn road is shown in front of the building.

This drawing accurately represents the appearance of the building as recorded in early views. These show La Morada to have been a sprawling, one-story, modified U-shaped building, placed at the top of a slight hill overlooking the Civic Center, at the terminating point of Paseo Delicias. From Paseo Delicias, the right L-shaped wing held 12 guest rooms. (There is no record of the original interiors of any of these spaces, but they probably included small rooms or suites with adjoining or shared bathrooms.) The large central section was used as the main lounge. To the left of this area was the three-bay dining room, and then the open verandah. Only the interiors of the main lounge and dining room were noted in early photographs. The main lounge was a large, spacious room, featuring a vaulted ceiling of exposed wooden trusses and purlins, and wooden ceiling. In the center of the northeast wall was the recessed entryway, flanked by two segmental arches which opened onto square reading nooks, which had windows on two walls. The northwest wall held the fireplace, with a projecting plastered mantel and hood, and another segmental-arched opening leading to the adjoining wing. One early photograph (published in Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 6 (December 1927): 13) shows a view of the original reception desk

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through the opening on this wall. On the southwest wall were three pairs of French doors which opened out onto the rear patio. Two segmentally arched openings on the southeast wall led into the dining room; above the southern one was a balconet. The dining room was large and square, with French doors opening out onto the verandah, and large windows facing Paseo Delicias. On the southwest wall, a French door opened to the back patio, and a large wooden door probably led to the kitchen. The ceiling of this room had exposed construction (beams and rafter tails).

5. Alterations and additions: The exterior of La Morada, as well as the interior rooms for which there is documentation of the original appearance, have undergone substantial alterations and additions. The original entryway has been altered: the walls separating the recessed entryway and the two adjoining reading nooks were broken through, the doorway brought up flush with the building wall, with a large open space created on the interior, supported by two columns. Also in the main lounge room, the fireplace was altered, and all the original segmentally arched openings were altered; on the southeast wall, the southern opening was closed up, as was the balconet above. All of the original decorative ironwork in this room was removed. The dining room was expanded two bays, the ceiling was dropped and plastered over, and the verandah removed. Extensions were also made at the rear of the original structure, so that part of the original rear patio was enclosed and altered. All of the original windows and doors have been replaced. Numerous additional buildings were constructed as the inn expanded (the first cottage on the grounds was built in 1931; a new one was added each year after 1946 through the late '50s), and the complex now numbers over forty structures. Although exact dates cannot be given for the above additions and alterations, except where noted, they can probably be dated to the period of expansion after World War II.

- B. Historical context: The existence of a guest house in which potential investors would be housed was apparently an integral part of the sales strategy for Rancho Santa Fe from the beginning, as was noted in L. G. Sinnard's September 1921 development proposal. The "improvements," Sinnard wrote, "are needed for the purpose of making the project attractive to the class of people to whom it must be presented," and consisted of:

A small, handsome structure for the accommodation of people inspecting the property. This building may later be converted and sold as a Club House. In fact, it might be called a "Club House" from the beginning and accommodations provided only by card. This will depend on selling policy adopted. It should contain an assembly hall for social meetings, the display of popular films and also of educational films for farm instruction and advertising

purposes. [N.B.: One such advertising film was made in 1924, and is now in the collection of the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society.]

The location selected for this building (See sketch of Civic Center, Plate No. 1 [reproduced in HABS No. CA-2305, sheet 1]) affords a remarkably fine view of the most attractive portions of the project. Attractive, comfortable, accommodations for prospective buyers is an invaluable aid to selling. (pp. 7-8)

Although many of Sinnard's specific proposals for this structure were not implemented (instead of a "Club House," it became an "Inn"; the site for the building was moved from a block on what became Paseo Delicias to the block which terminates that street, a placement that affords an even finer view "of the most attractive portions of the project"), it is clear that his idea of a structure that was at once guest house, sales aid, and community focal point was fundamental to the conception of the Civic Center.

Because the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company owned the building, Sinnard, who was named local project manager when development began in 1922, was also in charge of La Morada (as it had been named, meaning house, or dwelling place). In this task he was aided by kitchen and housekeeping staff and a female hostess who was the daily overseer. By all accounts, La Morada was a success; early issues of the Rancho Santa Fe Progress (begun in July 1927) are full of accounts of luncheons at La Morada, and famous guests, including Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. "The entire idea of La Morada is that our guests shall feel that they are not in a public inn but rather enjoying the comforts and pleasures of a well-regulated home," the Rancho Santa Fe Progress quoted Mrs. Florence Cheyne, hostess, in January 1928 (p.15).

In 1928, the Land Improvement Company's holdings were bought out by a group of Pasadena and Los Angeles businessmen acting for the Rancho Santa Fe Corporation. By 1930, however, the Corporation was bankrupt and the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company was forced to repossess their land. A. R. Bishop was hired as the Los Angeles land salesman, and Reginald M. Clotfelter was employed as the resident manager in Rancho Santa Fe. Like Sinnard (and Sidney Nelson, who replaced Sinnard in 1927), Clotfelter was in this capacity also manager of La Morada. Although it was extremely difficult to sell land during the Depression years, the guest house continued to function as such during that time. In April 1939 the building was sold to a Mr. Roslington, who (in Clotfelter's words) "was not making a go of it," and it was thus soon sold to George Richardson, of Chicago, in 1940. Richardson renamed the building The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe, and began to develop a master plan for expansion. After Pearl Harbor, Clotfelter again took over as manager, a position he held until Richardson sold the inn to Daniel Royce/Huntington Hotel Company in 1958. In the period 1946-57 numerous

guest cottages and other structures were erected, and the Inn became a community gathering place for a second generation of Rancho Santa Fe families, as well as a renowned resort listed in "Distinguished Hotels of America" and "Country Inns of America." In 1991, the Inn is still owned and managed by the Royce family/Huntington Hotel Company.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: La Morada is architecturally notable in several ways: as a rambling, extended one-story building with several wings, almost a precursor of the California ranch-style house; for the interior of the main lounge, which features a high, vaulted, wooden ceiling; for its attempt to merge indoor and outdoor spaces, based on the example of Spanish architecture and planning; and, as a whole, as the terminating point of the main axis (Paseo Delicias) of the 1922 Requa and Jackson Civic Center plan.
2. Condition of Fabric: The original fabric of this building has been severely altered.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This modified U-shaped building, with approximate original dimensions of 54' x 92', is asymmetrical in facade and plan.
2. Foundations: Unknown, but presumably concrete.
3. Walls: Stucco over wood frame.
4. Structural system, framing: Wood-framed construction. Crawl space or basement beneath building was inaccessible, so structural system is unclear at this time.
5. Porch: The verandah at the southeast end of the building, bordered by the dining room and the surrounding wall, had a wooden pergola with columns of frame and stucco. This whole structure has been removed.
6. Chimney: There is one brick chimney serving the fireplace in the main lounge. The square stack, which rises 3'-6" above the crest of the ridge, is stuccoed, has vent holes on each of its four sides, and has a gabled cap of Spanish tile.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The original main entrance door, deeply recessed from the facade, was a double ten-light with an arched eight-light transom window above. There were ten-light and single-light French doors leading out to the patio and verandah from the main lounge and the dining room. All of these doors have been replaced. All other original exterior doors are of unknown description.
- b. Windows: The two windows on either side of the main entrance were ten-light fixed sash flanked by ten-light casements. The typical window on the rear of the building was an eight-light fixed sash with flanking eight-light casements. The front facade of the dining room wing had three eight-light fixed sash with two flanking eight-light casements, all surmounted by a four-light fixed sash with two flanking four-light awning windows. The windows on the front and side facades of the guest room wing are of unknown description. All of the original windows have been replaced.

8. Roof: The central section of the building, enclosing the main lounge, has a gable roof covered with Spanish tile, regularly laid. The roofs over the remaining wings of the building are flat with a parapet, covered with asphalt and built-up roofing.
9. Decorative features: Original decorative iron lamps on either side of the main entryway have been removed.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The original floor plan of the building consisted of a central main room, which functioned as the guest lounge. To the right was an L-shaped wing of twelve guest rooms. To the left was a dining room and verandah, with what was presumably a kitchen behind. In 1991, the guest room wing is still used to house guests; several rooms function as the Inn's administrative offices. The main lounge is still used for the same purpose. The dining room has been extended into the space of the original verandah, and several more dining and other rooms have been added behind the original building.
2. Flooring: The original flooring of the main lounge room and the dining room was tile, in a decorative pattern, with area rugs. The tile still remains in the main lounge, although it has been replaced near the northeast wall. The tile in the dining room has been removed. All other original flooring is unknown.

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3. Wall and ceiling finish: The original wall finish was plaster, painted. In the main lounge, the ceiling is vaulted, with exposed wooden trusses and purlins, and wooden ceiling. There are decorative wooden brackets at each edge of the truss. These brackets have the same profile as the capitals of columns on the Paseo Delicias facade of the first school building, erected in Rancho Santa Fe in 1924.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Segmental-arched openings originally led from the main lounge into the guest room wing and the dining room. Any other original interior doorways and doors are of unknown description.
 - b. Windows: All original windows had cloth curtains, hung from decorative iron curtain rods. All original curtains and rods have been removed.
5. Decorative features and trim: There was an original projecting molded plaster mantel and hood over the fireplace in the main lounge; the fireplace has since been altered and these decorative features removed. Also in the main lounge, there was a balconet above a segmental-arched opening on the southeast wall, with a curved decorative iron railing, a projecting molded plaster support in an oriel motif, and long curtains hung from a decorative iron curtain rod above.
6. Hardware: The original hardware is of unknown description, and has been removed or replaced.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Early photographs record the presence of a radiator on the northeast wall of the main lounge, indicating that steam heat was used to heat the building. All original heating equipment has been removed and replaced.
 - b. Lighting: Early photographs record the presence of decorative wrought-iron wall sconces on all four walls of the main lounge. Individual lamps were also used to light this room. All original wall sconces and lamps have been removed. All other original lighting equipment is of unknown description, and has been removed.
 - c. Plumbing: Original plumbing system is of unknown description, and has been removed and replaced.

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D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: This building, located at the top of a small hill, faces northeast to Paseo Delicias, and is flanked by Linea del Cielo to the northwest and La Gracia to the southeast.
2. Historic landscape design: Little is known of the specific intentions of Glenn A. Moore, the landscape architect, for the original landscape design for La Morada. It is certain, however, that, as the centerpiece of the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company's plans for Rancho Santa Fe, the grounds of this building were lushly landscaped, with palm, eucalyptus, and numerous other trees and plants. Early photographs record the variety of landscaping on the grounds, as well as on several walls in the rear of the building, and on the pergola, which were covered with climbing plants. The rear of the building opened onto a large patio, planted with grass in the center, with tiled walks, surrounded by a low stuccoed wall.

Originally a short road, also called La Morada, cut through just below the main entrance to the building, between La Gracia and Linea del Cielo, and perpendicular to Paseo Delicias. On May 5, 1941, at the request of the Inn's owner, George Richardson, this road was closed to traffic, and Linea del Cielo became the road from which the main entrance was approached. This change allowed the Inn to acquire a new piece of property, the triangular piece of land created by La Morada, Linea del Cielo, and La Gracia, which was then landscaped. The western corner of this lot is now used as a croquet field.

3. Outbuildings: This building is the centerpiece of a complex that numbers over 40 structures in 1991. Most of the outbuildings are guest cottages, built in a style similar to La Morada (i.e., tile roofs and stuccoed walls are featured), but none of the cottages are architecturally significant or even distinguished. Other buildings include numerous garages and a meeting room.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Preliminary sketch for Guest House, Civic Center, Rancho Santa Fe.

Unsigned and undated, but in the hand of Lilian Rice. Location of original unknown. Photograph of sketch in the collection of University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara. This drawing was also published in the January 28, 1923, San Diego Union, section 2, page 5; and the March 4, 1928, Los Angeles Sunday Times, part V, page 8.

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Preliminary sketch for Cuest House, Civic Center, Rancho Santa Fe.

Published in Sinnard, L. C. Rancho Santa Fe: California - Yesterday and Today. (Chula Vista: Denrich Press, n.d. [1923?]), rear page.

B. Early Views:

"Douglas Fairbanks-Mary Pickford Fairbanks" Scrapbook, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

Clotfelter, Connie. Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe. Rancho Santa Fe: Conreg, 1985.

The Endless Miracle 1 no. 1 (July 1927): 8; 1 no. 2 (August 1927): 8.

Los Angeles Times (January 24, 1926): Farm and orchard magazine, 13.

Photographs, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

Photographs, San Diego Historical Society - Ticor Collection.

Photographs, Union Title Insurance and Trust Company Historical Collection, San Diego Historical Society.

Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 4 (October 1927): 1, 2; 1 no. 5 (November 1927): 4; 1 no. 6 (December 1927): 13; 1 no. 11 (May 1928): 2; 2 no. 3 (September 1928): 3; 3 no. 4 (October 1929): 7.

San Diego Tribune (October 15, 1927): part 2, page 1.

San Diego Union (July 3, 1927): section 2, page 5.

Scrapbook, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

Shippey, Lee. "Rancho Santa Fe - California's Perfectly Planned Community." Architect and Engineer 76 (February 1924): 55-63.
Reprint. n.p., n.d.

Sinnard, L. C. Rancho Santa Fe: California - Yesterday and Today. Chula Vista: Denrich Press, n.d. [1923?]

C. Interviews:

Reginald M. and Constance C. Clotfelter, interview with Lauren Farber, 1 July 1991.

D. Bibliography:

Clotfelter, Connie. Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe. Rancho Santa Fe: Conreg, 1985.

Eddy, Lucinda Liggett. "Lillian Jeanette Rice: The Lady as Architect." M.A. Thesis, University of San Diego, 1985.

_____. "Lillian Jenette Rice: Search For A Regional Ideal." Journal of San Diego History 29 (Fall 1983): 262-285.

The Endless Miracle and Rancho Santa Fe Progress. July 1927- October 1928.

Gebhard, David, and Robert Winter. A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California. Santa Barbara, CA: Peregrine Smith, 1977.

Rice, Lillian J. "More Building in 1928 than ever Before." Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 7 (January 1928): 11, 14.

"To Transform Big Range into Farm Center." San Diego Union, June 11, 1922.

E. Supplementary Material:

Copies of drawings explained in "Original Architectural Drawings," above.

Prepared by: Lauren Farber
HABS Project Historian
Rancho Santa Fe, CA
June 1991

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society, Inc. and Rancho Santa Fe Association. Under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), and Paul Dolinsky, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey and Project Leader, the documentation was completed in the HABS field office at Rancho Santa Fe, California, during the Summer of 1991 by Professor John P. White (Texas Tech University), Project Supervisor; Architectural Technicians Sheri L. Bonstelle (Columbia University); Juan Tampe (Catholic University of America); Piotr Trebacz (Warsaw University of Technology, Poland, U.S./I.C.O.M.O.S.); E. Matthew Walter (University of Hawaii at Manoa); and Architectural Historian Lauren Farber, Sally Kress Tompkins Fellow (University of Delaware).

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San Diego County
California

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